



August 18, 2006

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-128 Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd  
Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-125A Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and  
Science  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski  
Ranking Minority Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and  
Science  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Salmon Commercial Fishery Failure Funding

Dear Chairman Cochran, Chairman Shelby, Senator Byrd and Senator Mikulski,

Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez has declared a commercial fishery failure pursuant to section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act for the salmon fishing season in the states of California and Oregon (declaration attached). This is only the second time ever that the Secretary of Commerce has declared a commercial fishery failure before the fishing season has ended, which underscores the magnitude of the disaster. We appreciate the extraordinary personal attention the Secretary and his staff have given to this severe situation on our coast. We are writing to seek your assistance in providing emergency funding to help the affected fishing communities, either through an amendment or in conference.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council closed commercial salmon fishing this season along more than 400 nautical miles of coast, stretching from Florence, Oregon to Pigeon Point, California. The Council took such a drastic step because for the third consecutive year, the number of naturally spawning Klamath River Chinook salmon is expected to fall below the conservation floor called for in the fishery management plan for salmon.

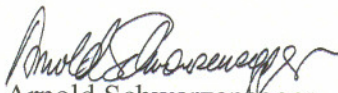
The largest fishery closure ever on the West Coast, this Federal decision is already having a devastating impact on our rural, coastal economies. According to the Secretary's declaration, the harvest of the commercial salmon fishery in California and Oregon is expected to plummet by 88% from the recent annual average, and ex-vessel revenue is expected to drop by 84%.


In our coastal communities, businesses are closing and people are missing mortgage, lease, and electricity payments. There are 1042 salmon trollers in the affected area, and thousands of fishermen whose livelihoods have been taken away from them.

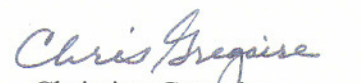
The Secretary has calculated that this disaster has caused \$16 million in direct harm to the commercial salmon fishery. The Secretary has asked for the States' assistance in measuring the damage to the recreational fishery and to the industries affected downstream (businesses such as docks, warehouses, and icehouses). As soon as we get that information, we will forward it to you. We request your help in providing the necessary emergency funding to the affected communities in our states.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our request. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

  
Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Governor of California

  
Ted Kulongoski  
Governor of Oregon

  
Christine Gregoire  
Governor of Washington

  
Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

  
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

  
Patty Murray  
United States Senator

  
Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator

  
Gordon Smith  
United States Senator

  
Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

Attachment